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Almost Everyone vs. Zbig

But the National Security Adviser hangs tough

Zbigniew Brzezinski. For most Americans the name is still a tongue twister, but it has become well known nonetheless, just as the proud, ambitious and dynamic Polish-born professor hoped it would when Jimmy Carter appointed him White House National Security Adviser nearly four years ago. But with his fame has come more notoriety and criticism than he expected. Aside from the President himself, Brzezinski is the most controversial member of a highly controversial Administration. He is widely blamed for many of the troubles that have beset the U.S. since he came into office.

Citing the delicacy of ongoing efforts to secure eventual liberty for the hostages, Brzezinski refuses to respond point by point to Sullivan's bill of particulars. (Khomeini last week specified the conditions for freeing the 52 captives: the return of the Shah's fortune to Iran; release of Iranian funds now blocked in American banks; cancellation of U.S. claims against Iran; and guarantees that the U.S. will not interfere in Iranian affairs.) But in an interview with TIME last week, Brzezinski characterized the Sullivan charges as "totally self-serving." He also denied one charge that, if true, would be espe-



The embattled Brzezinski in his office in the West Wing of the White House
Dazzling intellectual virtuosity, but theories sometimes too clever by half.

During a brief appearance at last month's National Democratic Convention in New York City, Brzezinski was booed by many of the delegates. Last week Brzezinski was the target of a scathing indictment by William H. Sullivan, former U.S. Ambassador to Tehran. In the latest round of one of Washington's favorite parlor games, "Who Lost Iran?" Sullivan pins the tail squarely on Brzezinski, accusing him of undermining diplomatic efforts to open contacts with the Ayatollah Khomeini and thus blunt the anti-Americanism of the revolutionary regime. Writing in the fall issue of *Foreign Policy* magazine, Sullivan also claims that Brzezinski first scuttled a U.S. plan to mediate between Khomeini and the Iranian armed forces, then tried to organize by remote control an anti-Khomeini military coup, even after the Sha

cially damning. Sullivan writes that in November 1978 Brzezinski dispatched Ardeshir Zahedi, then the Shah's envoy to Washington, on a fact-finding mission to Iran, thus circumventing and humiliating Sullivan, and that Brzezinski consulted with Zahedi every day over an open long-distance telephone line, with the Soviets presumably listening in. According to Brzezinski, however, Zahedi returned to Tehran on his own initiative and phoned only two or three times. "I have no regrets," says Brzezinski.

This week Brzezinski is preparing to defend another aspect of his performance during the Iran crisis, and he is scheduled to do so in an inquisitorial setting that his predecessors have been spared. The White House has waived the Executive privilege that normally protects National Security Advisers from congress-

agreed to testify before the special Senate Judiciary subcommittee investigating Billy Carter's ties with Libya.

In November Brzezinski asked the President's brother to invite a Washington-based Libyan diplomat to the White House. The purpose of the meeting was to persuade the Libyans to press Khomeini on the release of the hostages. "It was a reasonable thing to do in very trying circumstances," Brzezinski maintains, adding that soon after—and perhaps because of—Billy's intercessions, Libyan Strongman Muammar Gaddafi did indeed send the desired message to Khomeini, although Gaddafi's appeal had no discernible impact on the crisis.

But the question remains: Why was it necessary for either the President's brother or his National Security Adviser to act as intermediary with a member of the Libyan embassy in Washington? Such contacts are routinely handled by the State Department. This case, like that of Brzezinski's dealings with Zahedi, left an inescapable impression that he was attempting an end run around his supposed colleagues in Foggy Bottom and the Foreign Service. As a result, Brzezinski was more mistrusted and even despised than ever at the State Department and among career diplomats—hardly a desirable attitude toward the official who is supposed to coordinate the various agencies of U.S. foreign policy.

Brzezinski also faces questions from the Senate panel on why, in late March, he warned Billy that one of his Libyan business deals—an attempt on behalf of the Charter Oil Co. to obtain additional quotas of Libyan crude—could be embarrassing to the Administration. Brzezinski knew about the deal because he had received from CIA Director Stansfield Turner a top-secret report based on intelligence sources who would be extremely vulnerable if their identities were revealed, or even guessed.

Once again Brzezinski has no regrets. "I would have been in a reprehensible position if I had sat on it," he says of the report. Besides, "no classified information was conveyed to Billy. He knew what he was doing." Justice Department officials, looking into the possibility that Brzezinski may have violated the nation's espionage laws, say privately they think there is little chance he will face criminal charges. But they question his judgment.

So do many others, on many other issues. A man of dazzling intellectual virtuosity and erudition, Brzezinski has sometimes seemed to be badly served by his brilliance. He is so deft at formulating fancy theories, and he so likes to hear himself spin them out, that he has tended to pay less attention than he should to making those theories work in practice—and, indeed, to figuring out whether they can work. Brzezinski was a princ-